

THE SHINING OF THE FACE OF MOSES

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A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses’ hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.”
Exodus 34:29-35

A FAST of forty days does not improve the appearance of a man's countenance, he looks starved, wrinkled, old, haggard. Moses had fasted forty days twice at least, and according to many competent authorities the tenth chapter of Deuteronomy seems to imply that he fasted forty days three times in quick succession. I will not assert or deny the third forty days, but it is certain that, with a very slight interval, Moses fasted forty days, and then forty days more, and it is probable that to these must be added a third forty.

Small attractiveness would naturally remain in a face which had endured so stern an ordeal, but the Lord whom he served made his face brilliant with an unusual luster. The glory of the light of God upon his countenance may have been the reason why he remained so hale in after years of old age. This man of eighty spent forty years more in guiding Israel, and in the end his eye had not dimmed, nor his natural force abated. He that could fast forty days would be a hard morsel for death.

Those eyes which had looked upon the glory of God were not likely to wax dim amid earthly scenes, and that natural force which had endured the vision of the supernatural could well support the fatigues of the wilderness. God so sustained His servant, that his long and repeated fasting, during which he did not even drink water, did no harm to his physical constitution. The abstinence, even from water renders the fast the more remarkable, and lifts it out of similarity to modern feats of fasting.

Moses did not know, at the time, that his face was shining, but he did know it afterwards, and he has here recorded it. He gives in detail the fact of the brightness of his own face, and how others were struck with it, and what he had to do in order to associate with them. We are sure that this record was not made by reason of vanity, for Moses writes about himself in great lowliness of spirit, it was written under divine direction, with a worthy objective.

The man Moses was very meek, and his meekness entered into his authorship, as into all the other acts of his life, we are therefore sure that this record is for our profit. I am afraid, brethren, that God could not afford to make our faces shine, we would grow too proud. It needs a very meek and lowly spirit to bear the shinings of God. We only read of two men whose faces shone, and both were very meek. The one is Moses, in the Old Testament, the other is Stephen, in the New, whose last words

proved his meekness, for, when the Jews were stoning him, he prayed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Gentleness of nature and lowliness of mind are a fine background on which God may lay the brightness of His glory. Where these things abound, it may be safe for the Lord, not only to put His beauty upon a man, but also to make a record of the fact. Moses wrote this record with a reluctant pen. Since he did not write it out of vanity, let us not read it out of curiosity. He wrote it for our learning, let us learn by it, and may God the Holy Spirit cause our faces to shine today, as we read of the shining face of Moses!

It would appear, so far as we can make out the narrative, that his face continued to shine long afterward. After Moses had come down from the mount the brightness began to diminish. Paul tells us that it was a "glory to be done away," but when he went into the holy place to commune with God the brightness was revived, and he came out again and spoke to the people with that same glowing heaven upon his brow. When he addressed the people in the name of God, he took off the veil, and let them see the brightness of God in His ambassador, but as soon as he had done speaking, and fell back into his own private character, he drew a veil over his face, that none might be kept at a distance thereby.

The man Moses was as meek with the glory on his countenance as before it gathered there. God put great honor upon him, but he did not desire to make a display of that honor, nor childishly wish that it should be seen of men. For the people's sakes and for typical purposes, he veiled his face while in ordinary conversation with the people, and only unveiled it when he spoke in the name of the Lord.

Brethren, if God honors you as preachers or teachers, accept the honor, but do not attribute it to your own worthiness, or even to your own personality, but ascribe it to the office to which the Lord has called you. "I magnify mine office," said Paul, but you never find Paul magnifying himself. He wears the glory as an ambassador of God, not as a private individual. The dignity that God gives to His servants is bestowed upon their office, not upon themselves apart from it. They must never run away with it into daily life, and think that they themselves are "reverend," because their Lord is so, nor may they claim for their own thoughts the serious attention which they rightly demand for the Word of the Lord.

Ministers do not pretend to be a class of sacred beings, like the Brahmins of India, the only vantage-ground they occupy is, that the Lord speaks through them according to the gift of His Holy Spirit. Unveiled are our faces when we speak *to* God and *for* God, and among our brethren we would hide away anything from which we might claim superiority for ourselves.

I. With this as my preface, I shall now come immediately to my subject. Here is Moses with a strange glory upon his countenance. We will first answer the question, HOW CAME THIS GLORY TO LIE THERE?

The skin of Moses' face shone, how came it to do so?

The answer is, first, *it was a reflection of the glory which he had seen when he was with God in the holy mount.* It was the result of that partly answered prayer, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." God could not, at that time, grant the prayer in its fullness, for Moses was not capable of the vision, and the Lord told him, "Thou canst not see my face, and live." I look upon that prayer, however, as a very wonderful one, for this reason, that it was answered to the full, fourteen hundred years after it was presented.

The glory of God is only to be seen in the face of Christ Jesus, and on the top of Tabor, Moses saw the Son of God transfigured, and his prayer was there and then answered to its utmost bounds. In the transfiguration, God showed to Moses His full glory, for he was then made able to behold it. But though on the top of Mount Sinai he could not see the full glory of JEHOVAH, yet he had seen enough to make an impression upon him of such a kind that the skin of his face shone.

God is light, and they that look upon Him are enlightened, and reflect light around them. Moses spoke with God face to face as a man speaks with his friend, and this made his countenance glow. As the sun shining upon a reflector has its light thrown back again, often in a most brilliant fashion, so that the reflector looks like a minor sun, so was it with the face of Moses when it reflected the glory of the Lord.

The face of Moses was to God what the moon is to the sun. A saint shines on men when God has shone on him. We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the presence of the Lord. Would you shine in the valley?—first go up the mount, and commune with God. Would you shine, my brethren, with superior radiance? then be this your fervent prayer, “Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.” If the Lord lift upon you the light of *His* countenance, there will be no lack of light in *thy* countenance. In God’s light you shall give light.

The light on the face of Moses was *the result of fellowship with God*. That fellowship was of no common order. It was special and distinguished. I do not doubt that Moses walked with God after the fashion of believing men in the pursuit of his daily calling, but he spent two periods, of forty days each, in solitary fellowship with God. Everybody was away, Aaron, Joshua, and all the rest were far down below, and Moses was alone with God. His intercourse with God was intense, close, and familiar, and that not for one day, but for eighty days, at least!

Protracted fellowship brings a nearness which brief communion cannot attain. Each morning’s sun found him still in the light of God, each evening’s dew found his soul still saturated with the divine influence. What must be the effect of such whole-hearted, undisturbed fellowship with God? He heard no hum of the camp below, not even the lowing of cattle, or bleating of sheep came up from the foot of the mount. Moses had forgotten the world, save only as he pleaded for the people in an agony of prayer. No interests, either personal or family, disturbed his communion, he was oblivious of everything but JEHOVAH, the Glorious One, who completely overshadowed him.

Oh, for the enjoyment of such heavenly communion! My brothers and sisters, have we not lost a great deal by so seldom dwelling apart, so little seeking continuous, absorbing fellowship with the Most High? I am sure we have. We snatch a hasty minute of prayer, we afford a hurried quarter of an hour for Bible reading, and we think we have done well. Very far am I from saying that it is not well. But if for minutes we had hours, the gain might increase in proportion.

Oh, for nights of prayer! Oh, for the close shutting of the closet door, and a believing drawing nigh to God! There is no limit to the power we might obtain if such were the case. Though our faces might not be lit up with splendor, our lives would shine, our characters would become more pure and transparent, and our whole spirit would be so heavenly, that men would regard with wonder the brightness of our being. Thus, you see, the face of Moses shone because he had long looked upon the face of God.

I would have you note that this communion with God *included intense intercession for the people*. God will not have fellowship with our selfishness. Moses came out of himself, and became an intense pleader for the people, and thus he became like the Son of God, and the glory descended on him. How he pleaded! With what sighs and cries he besought JEHOVAH not to destroy the men who had vexed His Holy Spirit! They had degraded the Godhead by likening it unto a bullock which eats grass. They made a calf in Horeb, and bowed before it, saying, “These be thy gods, O Israel”!

Moses pleaded for the people down below, and not for himself. Here is a point in which, it may be, we fail. The Lord turned again the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends. The Lord loves intercessory prayer, and if ever He makes a man’s face to shine, it is when he, like Christ, has made intercession for the transgressors, and poured out his soul, not for himself, but for a guilty company.

More than that. In that intercession Moses had *exhibited a degree of self-abnegation reaching to the sublime*. God said to him, “Let me alone, that I may destroy them. I will make of thee a great nation.” The Lord’s covenant with Abraham was that Abraham’s seed should possess the land, but the Lord might have destroyed all the existing tribes except Moses, and then have made of the family of Moses a race in which the covenant with Abraham could have been kept to the letter.

What a prospect was set before him! The children of Moses should grow into an elect nation, heirs of all the promises of God. But no, Moses not only goes the length of putting aside the proffered honor, but he cries, “Blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.” Instead of his name being written in the place of the people, he would let their names stand at the expense of his own. When a man

can come to that, he is the man the skin of whose face is a fit parchment on which God may write the glory of His love. The less of self the more of God. When we can renounce all for God's glory and the good of His church, the Lord will not fail to smile upon us.

Yet once more. This man Moses not only obtained this brightness by his long communion and his intercessory prayer and self-oblivion, but by *his faithfulness among the people*. When he went down in the interval between the two fastings, and found the people worshipping the golden calf, he did not spare them.

He loved them, but he did not keep back the stern blow of justice. He said, "Who is on the LORD'S side?" And there came to him the tribe of Levi, and he said, "Go through the camp, and slay every man his brother who shall be found rebelling against the LORD." At once they cut off the idolaters, who were guilty of open treason against the King of Israel. But this was not enough, the whole nation must be chastened for its great sin, and humbled by a symbolical punishment.

I think I see Moses, having broken the tables in his holy wrath, now taking down their idol god, grinding it, pounding it, dissolving it in water, and sternly compelling the tribes to drink of the water. He made a nauseous, bitter draught out of their idol, and made them drink it, so that their bellies might be filled with their own iniquity, and they might know what it was to turn away from the Lord their God. Grand old Moses! Faithful servant of God! Unbending executioner of divine justice!

Meek were you, but by no means indifferent to truth and righteousness. God chooses not milksops, destitute of backbone, to wear His glory upon their faces. We have plenty of men made of sugar, nowadays, that melt into the stream of popular opinion, but these shall never ascend into the hill of the Lord, nor stand in His holy place, nor wear the tokens of His glory.

O my brother, it is needful that you be true to the Lord in public if you would have His fellowship in private. If the Lord can challenge you for yours unfaithfulness among men, He will never honor you with His own peculiar seal of light. Moses was no trimmer, no hunter after popularity, but he was sternly true to his Lord, and hence he was such that the Lord could safely make his face shine. Enough of this, though much more might be said, learn the useful lesson which this part of the subject teaches.

II. But, secondly, WHAT DID THIS SHINING OF HIS FACE MEAN?

This brightness on his face—what did it signify?

Very briefly it meant this, *God's special favor for Moses*. God seemed to say, "This is my man: I have chosen him above all others, among those that are born of women there is no greater than he, I have put a measure of my own glory upon him, and the token thereof shines in his face."

Surely, it also meant *special favor for Israel*. If they could but have understood I, they would not have been afraid, but conscience made them cowards. God, in effect, said to them, by the shining of the face of Moses, "I have had favor upon you, for I have accepted your intercessor. My servant Moses has been pleading for your lives, and in proof that I have accepted you and will spare you, I have written your pardon across his shining brow." Favor to the Lord Jesus is favor to us. Lord, when I hear You say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased," I rejoice that You are well-pleased with me in Christ Jesus. When God looks on the face of His Anointed, He looks with favor upon us.

This brightness on the face of Moses was also *God's witness to his commission*. He had sent him, for He had glorified him. The people could not doubt his commission when they looked upon his shining face. I suppose rays of light proceeded from it. Michael Angelo, in his famous statue of Moses, represents him with horns, the strange fancy is founded in the Vulgate version, which mistook the meaning of a Hebrew word, and translated it "horns."

Beams of light seemed to rise from that marvelous face, a halo of glory surrounded that solemn countenance, and the people could not but perceive that this was a man on whom God had looked.

And more. It was not only a witness of his office, but it was *an increase of his power*. The people were overawed by this strange light. They dared, even after this, to murmur against Moses, for they dared to murmur against God Himself, but still, to a people of such a temper as theirs, the supernatural light must have been a source of wonder and of awe.

*“They gazed and looked, and lo, on brow and face,
A glory and a brightness not of earth,
The eye lit up with fire of heavenly birth,
The whole man bright with beams of God’s great grace.”*

It gave their prophet authority with them, it made them tremble before him. They would not dare to contradict one who looked on them with such a face of glory, His speech was as a flame of fire, because his face was on a blaze.

The pith of the whole thing, I think, lies in this—the *face of Moses shone typically, to show that there is a great glory about the law of God*. It has a glory all its own from its spirituality, its holiness, its perfectness, its justice, its immutability, its power over the conscience, and so forth. It has eminent glory, because it has been ordained of God Himself, and therefore stands as the sacred rule of the universe. But this is not what Paul understands by the glory of the law. He makes the glory “of that which was to be abolished,” the glory of the ceremonial law, to lie in its end.

Now, the end of the law for righteousness is Christ. The law is given to point us to Christ, to drive us to Christ, to be our schoolmaster to whip us to Christ, to convince us of our need of Christ, and to shut us out from every other hope but that which begins and ends with Christ. The glory of the law is Christ. And so Moses comes with a glory on his face which the children of Israel could not perceive, nor steadfastly look into.

*“They looked and saw the glory and they shrank
From that dread vision, dazzling man frail sight.”*

Even as today men see outward rites that God has given but see not their glorious meaning, so was it with Israel in the wilderness, they saw sacrifices, but they knew not the Great Sacrifice, they saw the oil and the water, but they knew not the Holy Ghost, they saw ten thousand tokens dear and manifest of the ever-blessed Messiah, but they did not perceive Him so as to know Him when He came. Every type and ceremony might say, “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” The law is overlaid with the glory of Christ, as the face of Moses was covered with light. This is the deepest and innermost meaning of the sacred light which glowed upon the skin of the face of Moses.

III. And now, thirdly, this glory upon the face of Moses—WHY DID NOT MOSES KNOW OF IT?

For we read that “Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone.”

I answer, first, that *it is not easy for a man to see his own face*, unless he can borrow a looking-glass. Speaking in parable, the meaning I intend is this, it is not easy for a man to form an accurate judgment of his own character. There are people in the world who think they see their own faces clearly, and that they shine like suns, and yet they do not shine at all, except it be with brazen impudence and self-conceit. In other cases, lowly men are afraid that their faces do not shine at all, and yet they are brightness itself. It is no small part of the shining of some faces that their owners are modest and humble.

Brethren, you cannot see your own faces, and until you can do so, you must not imagine that you know your own characters. Upon reflection, you may arrive at something like a judgment, but it is not one which you may safely rely upon. Since Moses had no looking-glass, how could he tell that the skin of his face shone? Our own judgment of our own character usually errs on the side of partiality to ourselves. Nor is the evil so readily cured as some suppose, for the gift of seeing ourselves “as others see us” is not so corrective as might be supposed.

Some persist in seeing us through the colored spectacles of prejudice and ill-will, and this injustice is apt to create in us a further partiality to ourselves. If other men make mistakes about us who can see us, they probably do not make such great blunders about us as we do about ourselves, since we cannot see our own faces.

Truth to tell, we are very fond of ourselves, and have our own characters in high esteem, therefore we are unfair judges on points of difficulty about ourselves. Our temptation is to gross self-flattery, we

dream of strength where all is weakness, of wisdom where all is folly. A man does not need to see his own face, if that face be washed to purity, it will be enough that God sees it, and approves its beauty.

But I will tell you, further, why Moses did not see the glory of his own face. It was because *he had seen the glory of God*. When a man gets a clear view of the holiness of God, it is all over with all claim of personal excellence, from that day he abhors himself in dust and ashes. I might have thought myself pure, but how can I, when I find that the heavens are not clean in God's sight? I might have thought myself wise, but how can I, when I read that He charged His angels with folly? How can I speak of perfect purity as a thing of which I am possessed, after I have seen the King, the Lord of hosts? A vision of God is the quietus of boasting. He that has looked into the face of the sun is blinded to all other light.

Having given one sufficient reason, I am, perhaps, unwise to add another, but yet it may be profitable to remember that Moses had not seen the shining of his own face because *it had never once entered his thoughts to wish that his face should shine*. That is true beauty of character which comes without being sought—I mean unconscious excellence, a character which commands an admiration which it has never desired.

Are we not too apt to wish to be bright that others may see us? Have we not labored to grow in grace that we might outgrow others? Does no man pray for success in his ministry with a little squint of his eye towards an ambition to be thought “so useful”? Does no sister ever seek the salvation of her class that she may be esteemed in the church as a remarkable soul-winner? Did you never pray for holiness, and really mean that you wished to be considered holy? Have you never prayed in public with great fervor, with a half-suppressed wish to be thought a special man of God?

Would it not have greatly gratified you to hear men say, “What a prayer that was!”? Have you not even labored to be humble, that you might rejoice in your humility? I am afraid it is so. We are always praying, “Lord, make my face to shine,” but Moses never had such a wish, and therefore, when it did shine, he did not know it. He had not laid his plans for such an honor. Let us not set traps for personal reputation, or even glance a thought that way.

Another reason why he had not thought of it was that *he was so much engaged in doing good for others*. He gave himself up for those stiff-necked Israelites, he actually lived for them, and offered himself before God to die for them. He carried the whole people in his bosom as a nurse carries her child. He fed his flock like a shepherd, and like the Good Shepherd, he would have given his life for the sheep.

Oh, the self-sacrifice of the man Moses! He never thought about his own face, for he was thinking about *their* faces. What would he have given if they had been capable of such nearness to God as he himself enjoyed! Oh, to be so absorbed in doing good that we have not a thought or a care for our own personal repute! Then a man may do good in self-forgetfulness, and may find himself famous to his own amazement.

Once more, Moses could not very well have thought of his own face shining, for *he had no example of such a thing to suggest the idea*. Out of all those around him nobody else's face shone. When you live with men whose faces shine, then you inquire about yourself, for you naturally wish your face to shine like theirs. Aaron's face did not shine. Alas, poor Aaron! Nobody's face shone in all that camp, and so there was nothing to cause Moses to look for such a radiance on his own brow.

Mr. Bunyan, in his beautiful picture of Christiana and Mercy and the children coming up from the bath, represents the opposite state of things, for he says, “When the women were thus adorned, they seemed to be a terror one to the other, for that they could not see that glory each one on herself which they could see in each other. Now, therefore, they began to esteem each other better than themselves. ‘For you are fairer than I am,’ said one. And, ‘You are more comely than I am,’ said another. The children also stood amazed to see into what fashion they were brought.”

It is a great treat to see and admire the Christian virtues of our brethren in Christ, every Christian delights to see his friends comely in all the graces of the Holy Spirit. Moses had but little to gratify him in that way, especially at the period when he came down from the mount and found Aaron weakly

yielding to the people's sin. Even the choicest of the elders were far inferior to Moses, and therefore it was not suggested by his surroundings that his own face might shine.

It is well when men are not self-conscious. It is best, my beloved brethren, that our faces should shine to others and not to ourselves. If you might know your own excelling, do not know it, for there is an ill savor about self-consciousness. To come forward and say, "I am perfectly holy," is babyish. It is like a child who cries, "See my new frock! Look at my pretty new frock!" I tremble to hear one say, "I have quite passed out of the conflict mentioned in the seventh of Romans. I have got this, and I have got that." I am reminded of Jehu, when he said, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord," and yet Jehu was not right at heart before the Lord. There is not much to see when you wish men to see it. God save us from knowing too much about the shining of our own faces! May the light of His countenance fill the whole circle of our being, while we lie at His feet, mastered by a reverent awe of Him!

IV. I must hasten on to another interesting point. WHY DID MOSES WEAR A VEIL?

Having this brightness on his face, why did he hide it?

I answer, *in part the natural meekness of the man led him to do so*. He was forced into the position of leader, he never wished to be prominent, but the Lord put great pressure upon him in the desert, and drove him on to be as king in Jeshurun. He had no ambitions. Though made to be as God to Pharaoh, he never exalted himself in the Egyptian court. Among the Israelites he did not monopolize power, but he gladly yielded to the chosen elders a portion of his magisterial dignity. The man Moses was very meek, and so to hide the brightness of his face was a pleasure, and not a trial to him. Like many a lovely woman, he shrank from the public gaze. We shall do well to possess the grace of humility.

He veiled his face *in tender condescension to the people*. When they ran away from him, he called to them to know why they were afraid. "My lord, we fear that splendor on your brow." "Then, let me veil it," says he, "I would not terrify, but win." It was their fault that they could not bear the brightness, their fault, I say again, their *fault*, and yet he does not upbraid, nor stand upon his rights. He had compassion on their folly as well as on their weakness.

It may happen that a gracious man may be so evidently right that when others are offended at him, the offense is to be greatly blamed, and yet he will do well to yield in anything which does not involve principle. There is a modest veiling of excellences which shows a brother to be still more excellent than his excellences which have proven him. Quench not the light of your sternest principle, but veil it with abounding love.

He always sinks himself, this man Moses. The God-given glory of *his* face he does not slight, nor seek to abate, but so far as it would bring him honor from men, he puts it under a veil. That he may come closer to the people whom he loves, he is content to hide his glory. Let us also seek to bless the people, and to keep in touch with them.

But, beloved, the chief reason lies elsewhere. Why did Moses veil his face? The answer is this, *it was a judicial symbol, setting forth the sentence of God upon the people*. The Lord, by this token, as good as said, "You are so rebellious, so given to your idolatries, so unwilling to see, that henceforth you shall not see the brightness of My glory in the dispensation of the law in which you live. Moses shall veil his face because the veil is upon your hearts." It is a dreadful thing when God gives men up to judicial blindness, when He permits the veil which they have woven to abide over their minds, "that seeing they might not see; and hearing they might not understand."

As I told you in the reading, the veil was literally on Moses' face, but spiritually it was on their hearts. Henceforth they were not to see because they had not wished to see. He that willfully shuts his eyes will find that God takes away his sight. If you refuse to understand, justice will make you foolish. The shadow of destruction is insensibility. The eyes are blindfolded before the fatal volley is fired.

The practical warning I would earnestly apply. Do you not think we have a great many people around us—may we not belong to them ourselves?—whose foolish hearts are blinded so that the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ is veiled from them? Are not many suffering from veiled hearts?

In your circle there is a rare man of God, you have heard of his faith, he walks with God, others have told you what beauties they see in his character. You cannot see anything particular in him, you, on the contrary, despise him, and avoid his company. He wears a veil for you. Here is the Bible. “O book, exquisite sweetness!” Your dear mother calls it beyond all things precious. Dear soul, how her face brightens when she tells you how she has been sustained by it in the day of trouble! You read it now and then, but you do not see anything remarkable in it, certainly nothing that charms you, the Book is veiled to you.

Here is the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. You have heard us say what a wonderful Gospel it is. We have been overjoyed in describing it. You feel no enthusiasm. The Gospel is veiled to you. You have heard a sermon on some grand doctrine. Believers are ready to leap for joy, but you are utterly indifferent. The truth is veiled to you. This is a sad omen of a lost estate. The veil is on your heart, and your soul is in darkness which may be felt. Am I not speaking the truth about many of you?

O my friends, when you hear about Christ, and do not admire Him, conclude that you must be blinded, when you hear the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, and it does not charm you, conclude that the veil is on your hearts. Oh, that you would turn unto the Lord! For when you turn to God, the veil shall be taken away. Oh, that God the Holy Spirit would come and turn you by His almighty power! May He constrain you to seek the Lord today. Then shall the veil be taken away, and you shall see the beauty of the Lord Jesus in His salvation.

Here is a little prayer for you, use it often—“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” The wondrous things are in the law, may you behold them. The Holy Ghost must take the veil away, and remove the scales from your eyes, and then you will see, but not till then.

This is why Moses wore the veil—as a testimony that God had given them over to judicial blindness, because they refused to know His will. O Lord, deal not thus with this people!

V. I close with this question. WHAT OTHER LESSONS MAY WE LEARN FROM THE FACE OF MOSES?

First, learn *the exceeding glory of our lord Jesus Christ*. How so? Well, this was, so to speak, in a minor degree, the transfiguration of Moses, and all it came to was that *his face* shone. But when Christ came, He was transfigured as to His whole person. Not only His face shone, but His whole person and His garments also. Moses could veil his face, but the shining of our Lord could not be thus veiled, for it streamed through His raiment, which became “white and glistening.”

The veil of Moses was, so to speak, a raiment for his face, and it was able to keep in the glory, but our Lord was wearing His usual garment without seam, woven from the top throughout, and the light shone through His raiment, so that He and His clothing were alike bright. Nothing could conceal the glory of our Lord, which was so great, that whereas Israel saw it tremblingly, the disciples were cast into a deep sleep thereby. A word is used by an instructive commentator in reference to Christ’s transfiguration which expresses a forcible idea, he speaks of it as incandescence. He was all brightness and light, surpassing the mere shining of the skin, even as the sun far surpasses every form of its reflection.

The glory of Christ is beyond all comparison—the glory which excels. Oh, that I knew how to speak of it! But I feel like Paul, when he said, “I could not see for the glory of that light.” It overpowers me. The Lamb is the light of heaven itself, what shall I say more? John on the rock of Patmos saw our Lord in vision, and he said His “countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead.” Moses wore a light on his face that might be covered, but Jesus was, and is, all light, and in Him is no darkness at all. “That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

Another lesson is just this. *See the possibilities of glory which await human nature*. If Moses’ face can shine here, I can understand how, in the next state, when we are risen from the dead, our bodies may be all light and bright, and we ourselves like flames of fire. “This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” Unless our Well-beloved comes quickly, our bodies will be

sown in dishonor, and now I see how they can be raised in glory. Then shall we put on “the glory of the celestial.” We shall be among the shining ones, and shall ourselves shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father.

If the wrinkled face of the patriarch Moses, bronzed and browned by forty years in the Arabian desert, and lined by the long fast on the top of the mountain—if the dry parchment of his face could shine so marvelously, why should not our bodies be endowed with glory, when God shall raise them, again, from the grave? As a crocus bulb looks up from the soil wherein it was buried, and boldly lifts up a golden cup, which the sun fills with glory from the heavens, why should not we also bloom into perfection? “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be”—any more than it did appear what Moses should be—“but we know that, when he shall appear”—whose appearing is more glorious than that of Moses—“we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

Lastly, here is one more lesson. *What honor God may put upon any one of us if we really put honor upon Him!* My brothers, my sisters, if you are consecrated to God as Moses was, He can give you an unconscious influence which others will be compelled to recognize. Upon your brow the heavenly light of grace will rest, from your eyes the lamp of truth will shine. Walk in the light, as God is in the light, and have fellowship with Him, and then you, too, shall shine as God’s light-bearers, and your whole life shall be as the star which guided the wise men to Christ. Influencing men for God, the gracious will follow you, and the wicked will be awed by you, even as “Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy.”

O Spirit of God, rest on every one of us according to our capacity to endure the tongue of fire! Say unto us, O Savior, this morning, “Go forth, my friends, and be burning and shining lights to my praise.” Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—

Exodus 34:28-35, 2 Corinthians 3, 4:1-6

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—912, 427, 421

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.